

Governor's Commission on Family Farms
October 28, 1999
Kentucky State Fair and Exposition Center
10:00 AM EST

Members present: Jim Naive, Chairman; Bill Atkins; Alice Baesler; John Berry; Ron Catchen; Sharon Furches; John-Mark Hack; Mark Haney; Susan Harkins; Hampton "Hoppy" Henton; Denise Hoffman; Luther Mason; John Medley Jr.; Al Pedigo; Stephen Price; Susan Goddard representing Secretary Allen Rose; and Bob Sparks.

Absent were: Karen Armstrong-Cummings; Don Halcomb; Paul Hornback; Janet Johnson; David Kash; Chris Kummer; Sylvia Lovely; Mattie Mack; Ken Mattingly; William Brandon Reed; and Commissioner Billy Ray Smith.

Guests included: Jennifer Yezak-Molen, USDA-Research, Education & Economics.

Chairman Naïve called the meeting to order at 10:15.

The chairman welcomed the members and guests to the Commission meeting and expressed his pleasure at having the opportunity to bring the meeting to the first FFA National Convention hosted by Kentucky.

Bill Atkins advised that as a wintertime project, she was marketing "Kentucky Products Gift-Boxes." The boxes contain various products depending on the theme of the gift-box. She requested that the Commission members visit her website and provide feedback.

Chairman Naïve discussed the previous meeting and commented that he was pleased that the Governor's speech at the press conference was very farm and agriculturally oriented. He reflected on the comment made by a reporter at the press conference that the Commission had worked for a full year and made only one recommendation. The Chairman asked the members to think about how the Commission was conducting business and express their thoughts and ideas and on how the Commission could possibly improve business meetings and accomplish more.

Al Pedigo said that the Commission didn't reassess its priorities after the first year. That it jumped right into year old priorities. Perhaps education isn't the #1 priority at this time. He stated that setting priorities should be the first.

Mark Haney suggested that to make business meetings more productive, the Commission should to create a subcommittee system. Let the subcommittee do the research and make recommendations to the Commission. Chairman Naïve agreed.

Hoppy Henton stated that the Commission should find a cause for celebration, something that would call attention to the Commission and it's quest to promote and assist small farms. Choose an issue and champion it, stop being passive. When asked what issues are out there, Mr. Henton stated that there were at least 50. He will compile a list of important issues, but the Commission needs to prioritize and determine which issue they felt would be best.

Chairman Naïve asked if that perhaps would make the Commission appear to be a lobby group. John-Mark Hack stated that issue advocacy is not excluded in the Commission's mission.

There was lengthy discussion on a myriad of issues that could be addressed by the Commission. These issues included affecting national agricultural policy, promoting assistance to small businesses, educating farmers in marketing of farm products, developing agriculture/industry coop, Kentucky businesses buying Kentucky products, and building co-ops.

John Berry suggested that the Commission should first define what is our role? Are we created to troubleshoot and identify the problems of small farms and make suggestions and/or recommendations to the Governor for resolution of these problems? Are we to look to the future and decide what is best course of action and make recommendations for policy?

John-Mark Hack talked to the members about the Migrant Farm Labor Task Force, it's purpose, what it has accomplished, and it's goals. It was suggested that because of the nature of the work of the Task Force that it be made a subsidiary of the Commission on Family Farms. Governor Patton has approved.

Alice Baesler briefed the members on the Task Force's initiatives, and all the different areas in which the Task Force had worked.

The chairman asked Ms. Baesler if the Task Force was agreeable to becoming a subsidiary of the Commission. She advised that the Task Force was favorable to the idea. There was a motion and second to accept the Task Force as a subsidiary of the Commission on Family Farms. The motion passed.

John-Mark asked for a report from the Task Force at the next Commission meeting.

Chairman Naïve advised that after lunch the Committee would reconvene at the Kentucky Farm Bureau building off Hurstborne Lane. The Commission recessed for lunch.

The meeting reconvened at the Kentucky Farm Bureau building at 1:30 p.m.

Sharon Furches expressed concern that people have to ask what the Commission is doing. She hopes that the Commission will become more visible and take on a more active role.

John-Mark Hack stated that Commission members lobbying on behalf of the Commission would assume a level of independence that has not yet been achieved. He stated that he would speak with the Governor about having the Commission codified. Perhaps the Governor will recreate the Commission and redefine its function. Commission members are free to talk to their legislators as private citizens.

Sharon Furches asked if the Commission could get an audience with the Governor to discuss the report and other issues. John-Mark Hack explained that the Governor has been extremely busy and a meeting in the near future isn't likely. He further explained that the Commission's report probably would not get a rubberstamp of approval from the Governor, but that he was very impressed with the report and wanted to take time to review it thoroughly before meeting with Commission members.

Bill Adkins asked if possibly a committee could meet with the Governor? She explained the importance of getting some idea what the Governor does or does not support, before the members begin talking to their legislators. John-Mark stated that he would do his best to schedule a meeting.

Chairman Naïve assigned a committee to meet with the Governor: Jim Naïve, Bill Atkins, Karen Armstrong-Cummings, Susan Harkins, Ken Mattingly, Janet Johnson, Don Halcomb, and John Berry.

Hoppy Henton discussed Congressional legislation for drought disaster relief.

Chairman Naïve made appointments to the Urban/Rural Development Subcommittee as follows: Sylvia Lovely, Chairperson, Janet Johnson, Mark Haney, Ken Mattingly, Karen Armstrong-Cummings, Bill Atkins, John-Mark Hack, and Susan Harkins.

Ron Catchen asked that the Education Subcommittee members and any one else bring issues and statistics together and any questions to him. Would like for everyone to think about how to tap into "the school of hard knocks."

Alice Baesler reminded everyone about the "Women In Agriculture" conference scheduled for November.

➤ With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50.